

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Relating to the
WOOLLEN-MANUFACTORY,
Humbly offered
To the great Council of PARLIAMENT,
BY SOME
Merchants and others of the City of *London*, and elsewhere.

WHereas the Woollen-Manufactory is well known to be the richest Treasure in his Majesties Dominions, the Strength and Sinews of this Nation; and the maintaining and encouragement thereof is of such absolute necessity, that it cannot be reasonably expected the Nation should flourish or prosper without the same:

There is hereby humbly offered to the consideration of this honourable House, the great ruine and decay of the said Manufactory, especially as relating to the forrain Exportation thereof, for *France, Flanders, Holland*, and other neighbouring parts; that unless timely prevented, the same will necessarily more decrease, and at length be wholly destroyed.

The chief and greatest cause of such decay, being the private Exportation of our own and Irish Wooll to the aforesaid forreign parts, in such great and considerable quantities, that the same may be purchased there near as cheap as we can have it brought to several of our own Markets: the Exporter, according to computation, not gaining thereby (after running all the hazard) above 6 or 7 per Cent. By which plentiful supply, together with those excellent methods practicable amongst them, especially in *Holland* and *Zealand*, for setting their Poor on work, they have their Goods made much the cheaper. And also the great Duties they impose on the Importation of our Woollen Manufactories, especially in the French Dominions, thereby they not onely beat us out of trade in most of their own Markets which before we supply'd, but may also be suspected in short time (if they continue to improve themselves so much as of late years, and having such plentiful supplies of our Wooll) to be able to dispute with us for great part of our other forrain Trade in the said Manufactory.

It being undeniable that the French take off few or none of our middle and low - pric'd Clothes, Stuffs, or Druggets, because with the easie supply of our English and Irish Wooll, they themselves make the same or other sorts answerable thereto, which without the said Wooll they cannot reasonably effect to the least of their own advantage, or prejudice to ours; and albeit they take from us some small quantity of our finer sort of Broad Cloath, yet that is the less considerable, the same Cloath being compos'd the most of Spanish, and the least part of our own Wooll.

And as for the French Conquests, as *Lille, Armentiers, Valenciennes*, and other parts adjacent, it's well known that of late years they are so much improved in the Woollen-Manufactory, being chiefly encouraged thereto by the frequent supplies of our English and Irish Wooll, that they not alone supply their own and neighbouring Markets with the same, but others also at a considerable distance.

The like proves also true of the Inhabitants in and about *Brège*, whom being plentifully supplied with Irish Wooll from *Holland* and *Zealand*, have of late years so much increased in the manufacturing of Woollen, especially of a sort of low-pric'd Cloath in imitation of our Northern Dozens, that they maintain their Factors in many other parts for vending the same, which they also do at as (if not more) reasonable rates than can be afforded from hence.

And as for *Holland* and *Zealand*, &c. we are under much the same circumstances with them as relating to the Woollen-Manufactory; it being observable, that what they take from us is chiefly some Stuffs, together with some few Northern Dozens, Kerseys, and other low-pric'd goods, whereon is the least advantage, and wherewith they can be furnished from *Hull* and other out-Ports at such low rates, that they think it not worth their while to make the same, as finding a greater advantage to themselves in the finer sort of Woollen-Manufactories, with which they not onely supply their own, but also many forrain Markets, to our great detriment, there being nothing that can make them capable of so doing, but their industry, and methods of keeping their Poor at work, together with their frequent supplies of our English, Scotch, and Irish Wooll, and Fullers-earth.

Much more might be offered to consideration, not onely in respect of the forementioned parts, but also of several others which lie under the same circumstances; as also there might without much digression be sufficiently demonstrated, the great loss that accrues to our Nation through the Exportation of Wooll, so that each Pack to the value of about Ten Pound, hath been computed at near two Hundred Pound damage to the King and Kingdom; but the chief intent here-of is, by making evident in some degree the declining condition of the said Manufactory, thereby to enforce the great necessity of some convenient method for the Re-establishment and encouraging of the same; to which end the following Attempt is humbly propos'd, always with submission to better Judgments.

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It being very observable that the former Act of Parliament whereby the Exportation of Wooll is made Felony, hath very little contributed to the preventing the same, for that no provision is made thereby for the encouragement of the Informer; which if it were, yet few or none would be willing to inform against or prosecute another (especially in such cases) where their lives are concerned: It is therefore humbly proposed, that the said Clause in that Act may be repealed, and in stead thereof some others inserted which may be more effectual for its intended end.

The which is humbly conceived to be, by providing a sufficient encouragement for the Informer, and that no Wooll shall be permitted to be lodged but at a convenient distance from the Sea-shore; and that if any Wooll shall be discovered within that distance, especially after Sun-setting, to be carried either by Cart, Horse, or otherwise, that the same shall not onely be forfeited, together with the said Cart, Horse, &c. but also the Owners whole Estates; and the Driver of the said Cart or Horse to endure a years Imprisonment. And that if any Wooll shall be found in small Package, or Screw-pack'd, that the same shall not onely be forfeited, but the person with whom it is found shall forfeit four double the value. And if it shall be proved that Wooll hath been carried by Cart, Horse, or other ways within such a distance of the Sea-coast as before proposed, or that it shall be proved that any Wooll hath been conveyed on board, or Exported from any of the said Coasts, if the said Carriers, Owners, or Exporters have no Estate to forfeit, or are not apprehended to receive due punishment, the Division or Hundred (as in cases of Robberies) shall have a considerable Fine laid upon them for the same. And that if any Wooll be found privately conveying or conveyed on board any Vessel, the same shall be forfeit; the Owner or Exporter thereof, if found, shall not onely forfeit his whole Estate, but also be transported to serve on board the Gallies, together with the Master of the said Vessel, and his said Company; or else to endure imprisonment proportionably. And that if any Wooll be prov'd to be exported, the Owner or Exporter thereof being made known within a year and a day after such Fact committed, the said Owner or Exporter shall not onely forfeit their whole Estates, but also be transported, as aforesaid: which is yet more favourable than Felony. And that for the greater encouragement of the Informer, although he was a person concern'd or imployed in the exportation of Wooll, he shall not onely receive his Pardon for the same, but also the proposed Reward for his said Information. And for what relates to *Ireland*, it's humbly proposed, That whereas it is there customary, when Wooll is shipt off for *England*, to give Security it shall be delivered accordingly; yet afterwards, by procuring a Certificate, in bribing of the Officers, at some of the Ports of this Nation, as if the Wooll were delivered there, they get the said Security in *Ireland* to be discharg'd, notwithstanding they carry the said Wooll to forreign parts: That therefore if the Master of the said Ship, or any of his Company, or other persons whatsoever, shall within a year and a day after such Fact committed,

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make the same appear to such Officers as shall be appointed to that end, so as that the said Owner, Exporter, or Officers so corrupted may be secured, the Informer shall be immediately paid for his said Information 200 *l*. The Owner, Exporter, or Officers so corrupted, shall forfeit their whole Estates, be made incapable of ever bearing after any Office; and moreover, they shall (be confined to Prison for a considerable time, or) be transported, as before-mentioned.

It is also conceived to be very necessary, that any Discoverer, or other single Witness, though he hath profit thereby, ought to be sufficient Evidence; it being better for us to run the hazard that one man in seven years be injured by the perjury of an Informer, than that so many vile Offenders escape for want of Witness, who have no benefit by the seizure and evidence.

Now whereas it may be alleadg'd, that our Wooll so prevented from exportation will increase so much in quantity, and be brought so low in price at home, that the Owners, Grasers, Farmers, &c. will be thereby impoverished.

Against which it is humbly offered, that there are two ways to prevent the said inconveniencie: The first and best being to manufacture all the Wooll at home; the Method for which hath been already made publick by Mr. *Richard Haines*, and approved of by many Honourable Members of the House, as well as Merchants and others.

The other is; That the Wooll of the Nation increasing too much, it may be once in three or four years wholly destroy'd, and the value made good by a publick Contribution: but the many and great inconveniencies that will consequently follow this latter, and can sufficiently be demonstrated, will, as is humbly conceiv'd, render the same altogether unpracticable.

The Consideration of all which, is humbly represented to this Honourable House, to the intent, that when they have settled the Peace and Security of the Nation, care may be taken for its Welfare and Prosperity; which (as at any time shall be sufficiently demonstrated) consists in nothing more than the Improvement and Incouragement of the Woollen-Manufactory.



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to the Woollen-Manufactory*